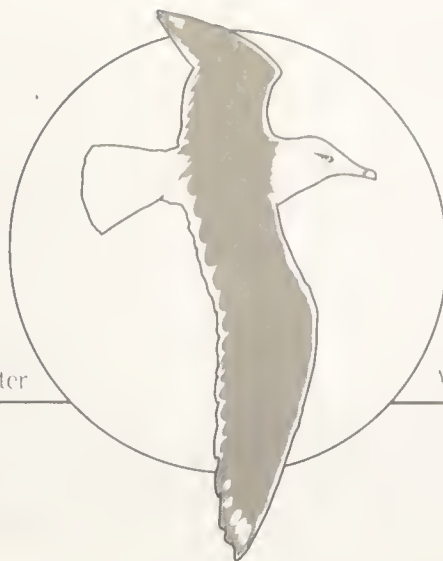


The Gull



Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 79, No. 3 March 1997

The SF SPCA Takes a Bite Out of the Endangered Species Act

by Alan Hopkins

Richard Avanzino, President of the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, asked dog walkers to willfully violate the Endangered Species Act when he called for a massive off-leash dog rally in the habitat of the Western Snowy Plover at Ocean Beach. Avanzino and a group called Rovers for Plovers, are attempting to have the leash-only law for dogs to protect the federally listed plovers overturned. It is believed that the two-mile section of Ocean Beach is the winter home of 5% of the remaining 1,200 to 1,600 coastal Western Snowy Plovers.

The Western Snowy Plover was federally listed as a threatened species in 1993. In 1994 Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) biologists began to monitor the Ocean Beach birds. As a result, and to comply with the mandate set by the Endangered Species Act, the GGNRA instituted the leash-only law January 1, 1997. Under the Act, it is against the law to "take" an endangered or threatened species. The Act defines "take" as to hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, harm, harass or pursue, or to attempt to engage in such conduct.

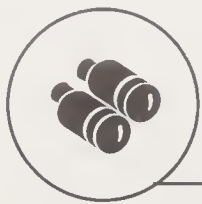
On November 15, 1996, GGNRA Wildlife Specialist Daphne Hatch released a report based on the findings from monitoring the plovers at Ocean Beach between 1988 and 1996. The study showed "of 5,692 dogs counted during surveys, only 10 percent

Continued on page 8



PHOTO BY ALAN HOPKINS

Please note:
Monthly meetings
are now on the
third Thursday of
the month. See
back page.



December 30 to January 27

With no let up in the wet weather through much of this period high lights remained scarce. Continuing birds provided much of the excitement, while the first "Spring" migrant Hummingbirds appeared, indicating a hopeful sign of better things to come.

Loons to Geese

The first Yellow-billed Loon of the winter was reported from Point Joe, Pacific Grove, MTY on Jan 11. In Point Arena, MEN the Laysan Albatross, continued to be seen, and may continue there as it has each winter for the last three years. Shearwater reports were scarce this month with scattered Sooty and Black-vented Shearwaters reported from San Mateo county (RT, PJM)

At Bodega Bay, SON, the **Emperor Goose** continues to be seen while an additional pair was found Jan 5 near Point Reyes Station, MRN (RS). Of the many reports of stray Geese, 15 White-fronted Geese over San Francisco on Jan 18 was interesting (AH).

Eurasian Wigeon continued to be reported from almost every county while 3 Eurasian Green-winged Teal were near Point Reyes Station on Jan 25 (RS), (along with 5 Eurasian Wigeon). Up to 5 Harlequin Duck remained at Glass Beach, Fort Bragg, MEN during this period. With a continuing Tufted Duck at the Sunnyvale Pollution Control Ponds, additional birds were found Jan 1 in Santa Cruz, (interestingly the first county record),

(per MPRBA), Jan 3 near Byron, CC (SG), Jan 19 near Palo Alto, SCC (RT), and also Jan 19 in Sonoma (DN).

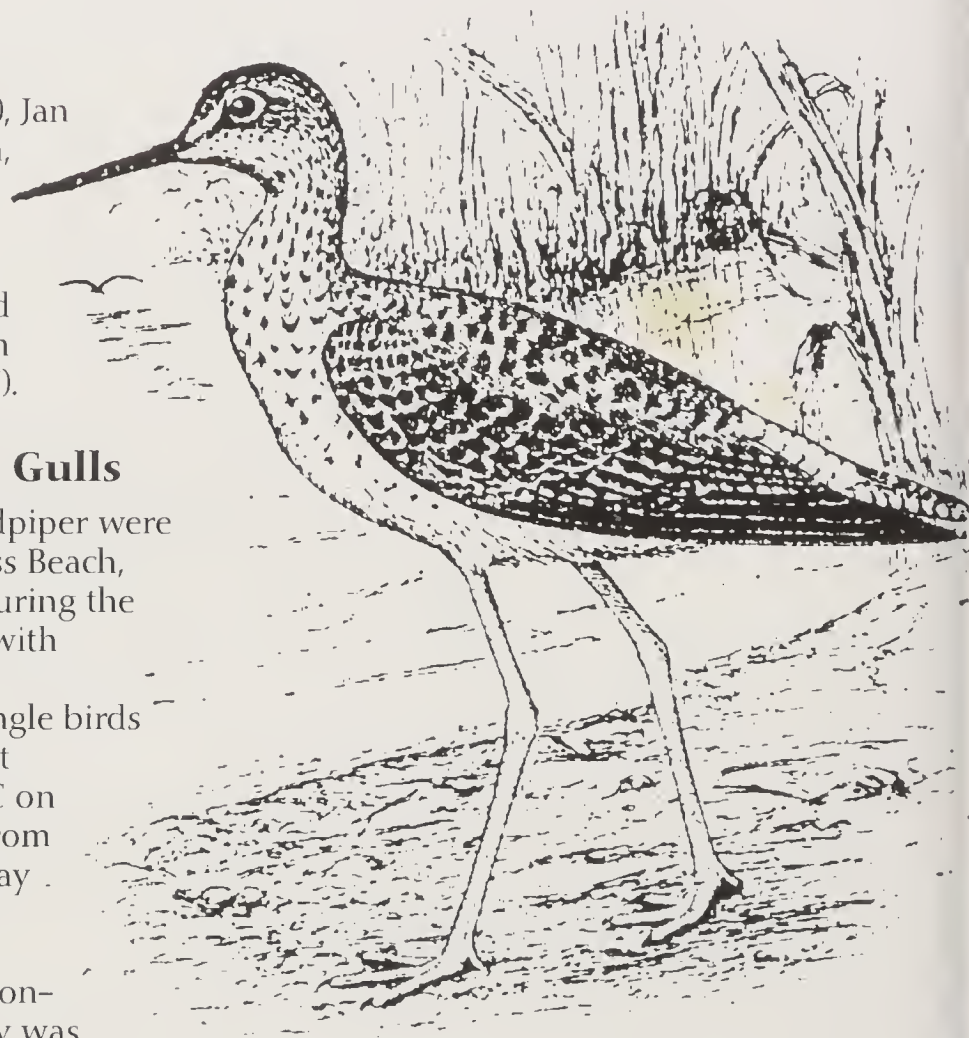
Hawks to Gulls

Rock Sandpiper were again at Glass Beach, Fort Bragg during the month (DT) with additional reports of single birds at Point Saint George, DNC on Jan 18 and from Humboldt Bay throughout the month.

Another continuing rarity was the **Lesser Black-backed Gull** which wandered between Alviso and the Coyote Creek Waterbird Pond, SCL, throughout the month. Again this month another apparent "**Kumlien's**" **Iceland Gull** was found, this time at the mouth of Pilarcitos Creek in San Mateo. Glaucous Gulls again proved numerous this month.

Hummingbirds to Warblers

Allen's Hummingbirds arrived in our area on time with the first reports from Ed Levin County Park, SCL on Jan 13 (MR) and from San Francisco on Jan 18 (AH).



The Ash-throated Flycatcher at the Guadeloupe River continues to be seen as do both **Dusky-capped Flycatchers** in San Francisco (Stern Grove) and Santa Cruz.

The Hammond's Flycatcher at Inverness, MRN was again reported during the Point Reyes CBC, (per DW) while another was banded at the BSOL, MON on Dec 16. A "Western" Flycatcher was in found in Sacramento during the month and an "Empidonax" Flycatcher seen Dec 15 in Half Moon Bay, SM was believed to be either a Gray or a Dusky flycatcher (DP).

An interesting report of Pinyon Jay was of a flock of 10-12 seen

near Point Reyes Station on Dec 22, (RS). A first county record of Clarks Nutcracker was found in Davis, YOL on Nov 30 (DS). Rare in winter Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher were seen in Alameda and San Mateo counties during the month (KL). Northern Shrikes appeared in Mono county, Dec 3 (JM), near Sacramento on Dec 6 and near Covelo, MEN from Dec 8 to at least Dec 18 (CC).

Solitary Vireo reports included birds of the "Blue-Headed" race in San Francisco and San Mateo at the end of Nov with a "Plumbeous" vireo also reported in San Francisco at Stow Lake, GGP on Dec 24 (AH).

Warbler highlights this month included:

Black & White Warbler

Dec 21 Half Moon Bay, SM (RT)

Dec 22/23 Lodi, SJC, (JS)

Dec 28 Muir Beach, MRN, (HCa)

Dec 28 Mendocino CBC, (DT)

Tennessee Warbler

Dec 15 San Bruno, SM, (RT)

Lucy's Warbler

Nov 30 Lake Merced, SE, (PJM)

Dec 27 Monterey CBC

Palm Warbler

Nov 30 - Dec 15 Fort Funston, SE, (PJM)

Dec 21 San Mateo, (RT)

Northern Waterthrush

Continuing birds in Bodega Bay, SON and Alviso, SCC

Hooded Warbler

Nov 28- Present

Female along Guadeloupe River, SM, (SR)

American Redstart

Dec 27 Monterey CBC

Blackbirds to Longspurs

A Rusty Blackbird was an interesting find on the Corte Madera CBC on Dec 28 (JP). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak found near Point Reyes Station, MRN on Dec 1 remained at least through Dec 10 (RP). Western Tanagers were found in many locations during this period while an Indigo Bunting was along the Guadeloupe River, SM on Nov 28 (SR). Cassins Finches continued to be well reported with birds being found in Alameda, San Mateo and San Francisco.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows continued to be reported at the Palo Alto Baylands, SCC throughout the month with up to 4 birds present on Dec 25 (CN). A Harris's Sparrow was found in Contra Costa on Dec 5 (MS) and continued to be seen through Dec 21. A Black-throated Sparrow frequented a feeder near Sacramento, this being only the third county record for this species, (SRBC)

The previously reported McCowns Longspur remained near Nicholas in Placer county at least through Nov 29, being joined by at least three Lapland Longspur. (RP, SRBA).

The monthly *Observation* column is generated from reports made to the Northern California Bird Box and Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert, (MPRBA) or to the author. Some sightings are unconfirmed and numbers of birds are often best regarded as estimates or "best guesses". In general, birds in boldface are very rare in our region, geographically or seasonally. Many of these are currently reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Observers are encouraged to provide written and/or photographic documentation to the CBRC, c/o Michael Patten, P.O. Box 51959, Riverside, CA 92517-2959 for any species currently on the review list. A list of review species can also be obtained from the CBRC secretary at the address above. This data is made possible by all the observers who contributed their reports to the Northern California Bird Box and Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert, (MPRBA).

If anybody has photos of birds reported in this column and would be interested in letting us post them on our web site we would be very appreciative. Please feel free to contact me to discuss.

Abbreviations for Observers: FB, Florence Bennett; EB, Ellen Bluestein; CC, Chris Carter; HCa, Harrison Carr; HIC, Hugh Cotter; BH, Bruce Hoilet; AH, Alan Hopkins; KHi, Kevin Hintsa; BK, Bob Keiffer; KL, Kay Loughman; MM, Mike Mammoser; PJM, Peter Metropolis; JM, Joe Morlan; DPM, Dan Murphy; CN, Christi Nelson; JP, Jeff Perkins; RP, Roy Poucher; DP, David Powell; BK, Bob Reiling; SR, Steve Rottenborn; BS, Barry Sauppe; RS, Rich Stallcup; JS, John Sterling; MS, Maury Stern; GS, Grace Steuer; DS, Dan Stoebel; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; JW, Jerry White; DW, David Wimpfheimer.

Abbreviations for counties: ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MTY, Monterey; SE, San Francisco; SJ, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SON, Sonoma; YOL, Yolo.

Other abbreviations used: AMSP, Andrew Molera State Park; Monterey, CCRS, Coyote Creek Riparian Station; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin; SEFI, South East Farallon Islands, San Francisco; per MPRBA - per Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert.

Conservation News and Thoughts

by Carolyn Kolka and Arthur Feinstein

The response to our February column calling for people to join the Armchair Activist program has been overwhelming. We have gained over 20 more participants and we have sent them the latest issue which deals with funding international population and family planning centers. The money for funding these centers was put on hold by last year's Congress and support is needed to reactivate it and make it available. Both daily newspapers have written editorials concerning this issue so our timing is perfect. The deadline for writing on this issue is March 1st, so it is too late for those of you reading this to write.

You can still help out on the Klamath Refuge problems that we wrote about in the last issue of the Gull by writing to Senator Dianne Feinstein (U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510) and asking her to support correction of continued violations of federal laws in the operation of these refuges. The issues are the excessive agricultural use of refuge

lands and the failure of the Bureau of Reclamation to deliver sufficient water to the marshes utilized by migratory waterfowl.

Other issues that the Conservation committee dealt with in February were: (it meets the second Monday of the month at the GGAS office in the East Bay and call the office 843 2222 to find out the meeting time for San Francisco)

1 Berkeley's Task Force Meetings on dog use of parks. Our position is that dogs have to be leashed if they will endanger wildlife and we have written to the city stating that. There have been 2 public comment meetings held in January and there is to be a report out in March with the results of the Task Force.

2 A GGAS Alameda Refuge Committee has been formed to deal with how the new refuge will be managed and how big a part GGAS will play in it. Over 30 people

have joined the Committee and the enthusiasm is incredible.

3 A plan to have a marsh clean-up day for Earth Day on April 19th. We are thinking about working on the Bay trail from Pt. Isabelle to Richmond. Another alternative or addition would be the Albany shoreline. We have to coordinate this with East Bay Regional Parks District so more information will be available in the April Gull. Please keep the date open on your calendar and join us—it's a beautiful trail and it does need cleaning up.

4 The proposed new Oakland Bay Bridge and its possible impacts to the mudflats at the mouth of the Emeryville Crescent. More in the months to come.

5 GGAS support for the opposition to the Wente project in the Tassajara Valley. There is a huge development planned that could be the beginning of the end of open space in that valley.

Again, thanks to you who have joined the Armchair Activist Team. We need another 50 to reach our goal of 200. Call or write the GGAS office, 510-843-2222, and give us your name, address, and phone number (you can leave the information on our answering machine if we're not there).



1996 Oakland Christmas Bird Count Results

It was wet and windy, but 152 brave birders still hit the trails and shorelines to participate in the 1996 Oakland CBC. Old-timers thought it was the wildest weather we've had on count day in years. Considering these adverse conditions, however, the results were remarkably good.

Highlights include: Ross' Goose (seen 2 years out of 23) and Brant (3 out of 23) in Bay Farm Island, Bald Eagle (4 out of 23 years) in Upper San Leandro Reservoir, Yellow Warbler (the first in count history) in the UC Berkeley Area, Western Tanager (first in count history) in Mills College, and Cassin's Finch (2 out of 23 years) seen at a feeder. We had record highs for the following species: Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Clapper Rail (highest number since 1981), Virginia Rail, Sora, Black-necked Stilt, Greater Yellowlegs, Mew Gull, and Common Raven. A

high winter tide of 6.6 feet may have contributed to unusually high rail numbers. Our species total of 174 (plus two count-week species - House Wren and Barn Owl) approximated the 23-year average.

For low points, most likely due to rain and wind, we had the third lowest number of individuals (only '86 and '95 were lower), and we had record lows for the following species: Brant's Cormorant, California Quail, Spotted Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Bonaparte's Gull, Western Scrub Jay, Plain Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, Winter Wren, Wrentit, California Thrasher, American Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, Spotted Towhee, Fox and Song Sparrows, and House Finch.

This was Kay Loughan's last year as the count compiler. We are very grateful for her years of service. Thanks also to the faithful area leaders, especially those who have been leading the same areas for many years. Consistency and knowledge of the areas produce the best results. Hopefully our new leaders will continue to lead for many years to come. Thanks to Art for all his support in our Chapter's office



and Jane Larkin and Jean Lucken who collected money at the count dinner. Thanks to Rebecca and Carolyn, who put together a wonderful dinner on very short notice. Nick Story helped by making a giant wall chart of species likely to be seen to help us tally our count results. And, of course, thanks to all who participated in the count despite the adverse conditions, including the feeder watchers who saw several species not found in other areas. We hope to see you again next year!

If you have any suggestions on how to improve the Oakland CBC, please let us know:

Clyde Morris & Joelle Buffa
551 Jean Street #515
Oakland, CA 94610
(510) 658-8449

Gifts and Bequests

Richard Adams, Beverly Galloway, David Hendler, William & Louise Lidicker, Brent Malarkey, Harlan & Ann Richter, Diane Wilson



Winding my way across a foggy San Pablo Dam Road, I spotted many raptors perched on wires, poles, and trees, patiently awaiting the warm thermals to form before launching themselves skyward in search of food. Ah, winter has arrived, the best time of year to observe the abundance of hawks in the Bay area. Simply look at your field guide and you'll see that there are few hawks, and eagles which don't visit us at one time or another. Driving to Bodega Bay we are treated to a large number of Red-shouldered Hawks, hunched over in their characteristic posture as they perch on wires perusing the fields for small rodents and reptiles. Kestrels vie for space even though their territories are small, and Red-tailed Hawks wheel in the gray skies alongside masses of Turkey Vultures.

If you happen to be in the Central Valley, look for White-tailed Kites (formerly Black-shouldered Kites) which have made an amazing comeback from the Endangered Species List. They can be found all the way to the coast now! Also look for Swainson's and Ferruginous Hawks in the winter as well as the Northern Harrier. All of these birds like flat grassy areas. The Harrier also likes marshes, which is why it is also known as the Marsh Hawk, and is wide-spread in California. You will likely see them soaring low over fields, flying back and forth on their long wings, occasionally turning to

expose their white rump patch. Check coastal areas for in winter for Rough-legged Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, Osprey, and the occasional Merlin. Eagles are less abundant, but Golden Eagles soar over Mt. Diablo and surrounding Contra Costa County hilltops. We have read the exciting news of Bald Eagles nesting on an Alameda County reservoir, and can only hope that other pairs will find other local property just as enticing. How about Broines?

In the accipiter family, both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks are always around. They especially like to hang out near our bird feeders, hoping for a songbird snack (that's the food chain for you). And then there is the most numerous of hawks, the Red-tailed. I never tire of them because they are challenging to identify. No hawk has more variations of color and markings among both immatures and adults. They come in all shades, dark and light. They usually have a noticeable dark belly band and in flight, there is a dark bar underneath on the leading edge of the wing between the head and the "wrist" of the wing. Other than their red tails, these are the best identification marks.

A typical day for a hawk begins much like our own. At first light, the hawk begins yawning and stretching. He fans his tail and stretches one wing, then the other, and the legs are given a good lengthening. Some are morning bathers and even the least vocal species tend to vocal-

ize early in the day. Small raptors are up earliest since they need to be the early bird to catch the early songbird. The larger hawks may stay put until the sun has been up for an hour or so. During winter, more time is spent hunting than in the summer when the prey is not only abundant, but also young and inexperienced.

There is hardly a person alive who doesn't admire the sight of a raptor exhibiting any of his repertoire of flight maneuvers. They have fascinated humans since they first appeared and many are featured in primitive religions. No doubt this group of birds inspired envious men to develop our own means of flight. When bird watching, don't forget to look skyward for a cheap thrill.

On Your Mark, G

Now is the time to mark April 26 on your calendar! It's John J. Audubon's birthday and the date of the GGAS Birdathon. Whether you're a backyard birder, a chaser of rarities, the spouse of an avid lister, or simply a friend to birds and supporter of the Audubon Society, there is a way for you to participate in this annual fundraiser. Here's what you can do:

Birders of all levels: Gather pledges! On Birdathon Day (or

Join the Golden Gate Audubon Society Education Committee

by Louise Harm

To conserve our natural resources, we must teach people to appreciate them as we do. We are looking for volunteers to help develop and carry out an education program for GGAS. If you are a teacher (currently teaching or retired), work with children in another context, or are simply interested in bringing conservation issues to the next generation, we can use your ideas and time. Come to our meeting in March to find out how you can participate!

Now that a National Wildlife Refuge has been established at the Alameda Naval Airforce Station, education becomes integral in any plans we may have for the land. Together with the Friends of the Alameda Refuge Committee, we can begin to look at ways to bring people to the

property, teaching them the importance of the refuge's existence. I highly encourage residents of Alameda to attend this meeting!

We are also specifically interested in beginning a youth environmental service program (YES!) developed to actively engage high school students in conservation. We can use youthful minds and bodies in a variety of tasks, with the specific desire of bringing these students into direct involvement on the Refuge project. To begin YES!, we need people who have the desire to work with dynamic young people and time to commit to the program. The program has many varying opportunities for volunteers: time commitments both large and small. Find out about this exciting opportunity to train and

work with our future environmental leaders.

Unique to GGAS is our Panama Committee, devoted to working directly with Panama Audubon to help conserve Panama's vital habitats. Together, our two committees can work to educate a broader audience.

We are also looking for volunteers for a variety of tasks, including presenting our prepared bird slide show to Bay Area classrooms. Educational outreach is continual, but to make it happen, we must have a strong body of volunteers.

A meeting is scheduled for **March 27, 1997 at 7:30 pm** at the GGAS office, 2530 San Pablo Ave., just south of Dwight Way. For more information, please call Louise Harm, the GGAS Education Chair, at (510) 845-2482. }

Get, BIRD!

any day between April 19 and May 3), bird watch like crazy, on your own or on a team. Then collect the promised donations from your sponsors and send them to the GGAS office.

Sponsors and friends of bird-

ers: Make a pledge to your favorite birder to donate 5, 10, 50 cents or even a dollar per wild bird species spotted during the birdathon.

Supporters of Audubon:

Simply write a check for any

amount, or pledge an amount per species spotted by one of the official Birdathon teams. Some of the old standard teams will be returning this year, among them Alan Hopkins and his Loonaticks and Dan Murphy's M.Ob., and there will be a few newcomers like Friends of Lake Merced and the Biology Faculty and Staff of City College of San Francisco.

Also: If you work for a kind-hearted generous company, you could form a corporate team or solicit corporate sponsorship for an official team.

Anyway you choose to participate in the Birdathon, you will be helping great causes for birds. One half of the money raised will go to support local Audubon Adventures education programs, and the other half will go toward National Audubon's Partners in Flight - The Panama Committee. What better way to celebrate John Audubon's birthday?

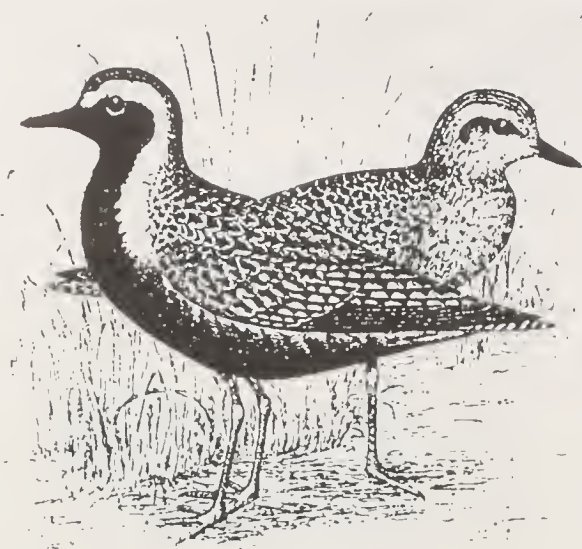
Be sure to check the April *Gull* for the pledge form and a complete list of official Birdathon Teams. For more information, contact Anna-Marie Bratton at (415) 452-1809. }

The SF SPCA Takes a Bite

were leashed, 50 percent were classified as roaming with a potential to chase birds, and 6 percent (362 dogs) were observed chasing birds." Keep in mind that the beach could not be monitored every moment, but in 40 hours of direct observation, 19 dogs were seen chasing 62 plovers. Counting the times dogs chase the plovers when they are not being monitored, this could translate to as many as 6,000 chases in the ten months that the plovers visit the beach! While there are other factors that could be detrimental to the plovers at Ocean Beach, none of them purposely "harass" or "pursue" snowies as the off-leash dogs do.

At meetings held by the GGNRA and the San Francisco Commission on Animal Control and Welfare, people who oppose the leash-only law claimed that the dogs didn't hurt the plovers and that none of the plovers had died as a result of a dog attack. Some stated that the birds even enjoyed being chased! Many are unaware that one of the primary functions for migratory birds on their wintering grounds is to accumulate the enormous fat reserves needed for migration and reproduction. It is hard to store fat when you are being chased up and down the beach all day. Although dogs may not kill the birds outright, they may be causing declines in the birth rate of the plover.

The SF SPCA distributed a paper criticizing Hatch's plover study, and it presents many of the GGNRA findings out of context and misinterprets others. One



example of the SPCA's stretching of findings can be seen in their statement: "The dog ban...ignores the real culprits: Human activities, including crowds and All-Terrain-Vehicles, were shown... to correspond to drops of 50 to 100 percent in the number of plovers on Ocean Beach." This statement sounds as though ATVs and large masses of people are constantly disturbing the plovers, when in reality this refers to only two events. The GGNRA paper further explains that these declines may be an anomaly because the birds became difficult to find. The SPCA statement also seems to imply that dogs chasing birds is not a part of human disturbance.

Asking dog walkers to keep their pets leashed in the Snowy Plover area is just one of the actions being taken in the plover management plan, but dog walkers claim that they're being singled out. The SPCA paper concludes with this statement "...the ban on off-leash dogs appears to be nothing more than an arbitrary and capricious exercise of power by a bureaucracy that has used the plight of the Snowy Plover as a pretext for taking hostile measures against dogs and ousting responsible pet owners from public lands." Those who

have been involved with the GGNRA and SF SPCA know that this is not the case. The Park Service has made a good faith effort to consider the needs of dog walkers. The GGNRA capitulated to the demands of activist dog walkers and reversed a previous decision, and now off-leash activities are allowed at Fort Funston. At Crissy Field, the area of off-leash use will increase from 30 to 70 acres, and dogs are permitted off leash at Baker Beach. At Ocean Beach, dogs are still allowed off-leash north of Golden Gate Park and south of Sloat Street, and leashed dogs are still allowed on all of Ocean Beach. On most federal lands where there are threatened and endangered species, such as the Snowy Plover, dogs are altogether banned.

The threat posed by the dog walkers is not only to the Snowy Plover but the Endangered Species Act itself. If the National Park Service decides to overturn the leash-only law and ignore the mandate of the Endangered Species Act, solely because of pressure from the SPCA, it will have driven a small sliver of a large wedge into the heart of the Act. When local self-interest groups find they are able to bully state and federal agencies into ignoring the Endangered Species Act, our country's natural heritage will soon be in great peril. We applaud the National Park Service for taking a strong stand on behalf of the Snowy Plover. Please write them a letter and show that you support these efforts!

It's Time to Host at Audubon Canyon Ranch

Once again the egrets and herons are returning to their traditional nesting site in the tops of the redwoods at our sanctuary, Audubon Canyon Ranch on Bolinas Lagoon in Marin County. Each year thousands of people come to witness this wonderful event. And each year we offer GGAS members an opportunity to help make Audubon Canyon Ranch a successful sanctuary. You can do this by acting as a host to the many visitors who come to the ranch on weekends during the nesting season.

What does hosting involve? You simply welcome people to the ranch and show them where to park. You then tell them about the ranch, and the egrets and herons, offer them a brochure and show them where the bookstore and museum are located, sending them on their way.

We will send you an information packet before your hosting day so that you will be able to answer any questions. And don't worry, there will be an ACR staff person on hand for questions you don't have the answers to.

You won't be alone in your hosting. We try to have at least six other GGAS members helping you. With so much help, there will be plenty of time for you to see the nesting birds and walk the three mile trail.

It's lots of fun,

and it's a great way to get outside on a weekend and see beautiful Bolinas lagoon and the nesting egrets and herons.

This year we are hosting on the following weekends:

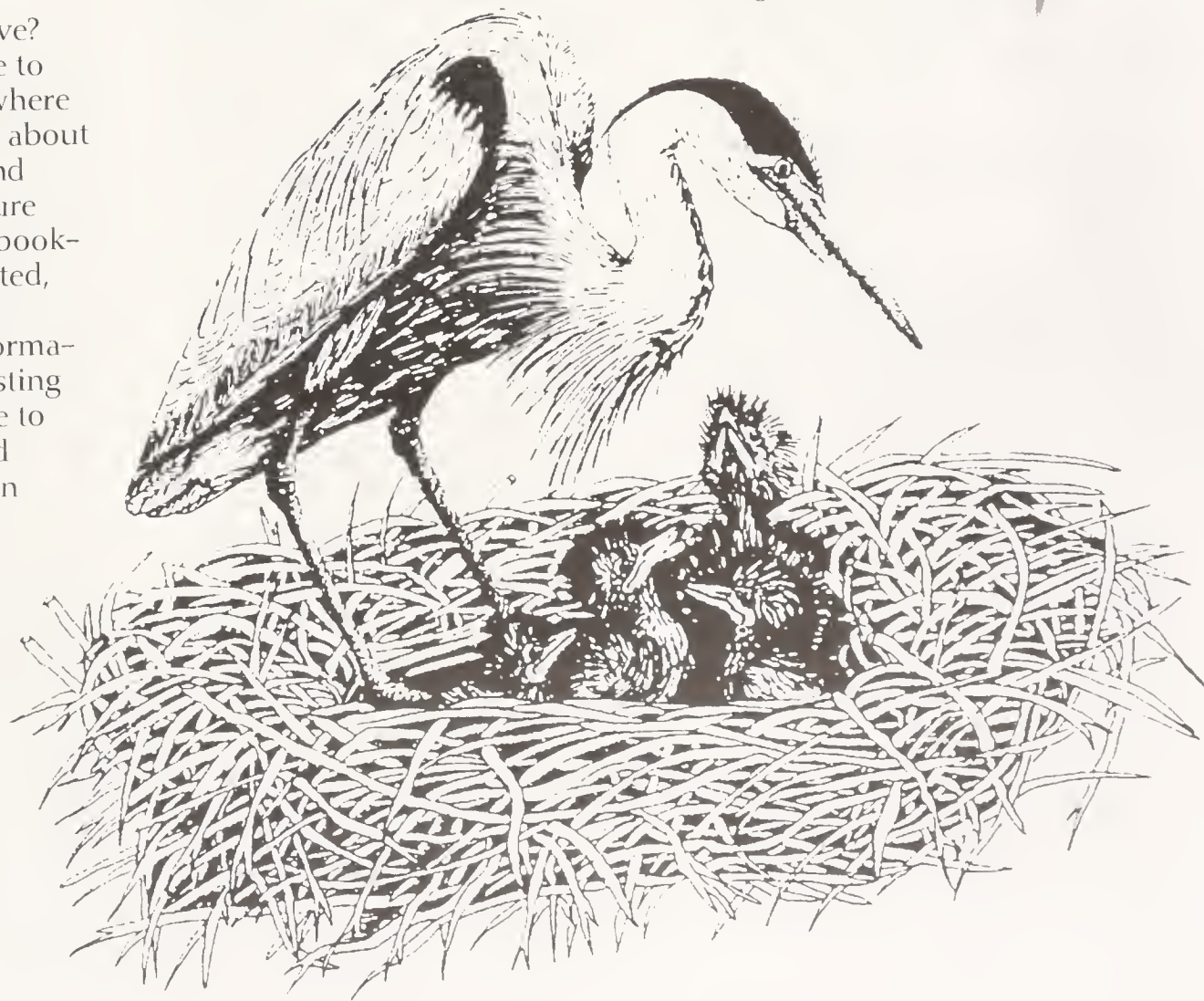
April 5, 6 May 3, 4, 24
June 1, 7, 8 July 4

Please join us in the fun. Call the GGAS Office at (510) 843-2222 and reserve your hosting day.

Other volunteer opportunities at the Ranch include their Research and Resource

Management Projects: Pampas Grass, Ponds, Plant Phenology and German Ivy. Call Ray Peterson at (415) 988-9244 for details.

The ACR Harbor Seal Study of Tomales Bay continues this year and extends to Bolinas Lagoon, educating the public and collecting data on the effects of human disturbances on reproductive success. Volunteers are needed to commit to an orientation training and to volunteer on weekends and weekdays at low-tide periods for several hours. Call Mary Ellen King at (707) 537-1546.





Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

SATURDAY MARCH 8 LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS, MARIN COUNTY

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot. See February Gull for details. Leader: Hugh Cotter (415) 752-6776.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 12 MINI TRIP TO MITCHELL CANYON

We will meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Mitchell Canyon Rd. parking lot at the end of the road. See February Gull for details. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. (\$)

SUNDAY MARCH 16 STRYBING ARBORETUM, GOLDEN GATE PARK

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the arboretum (near 9th Avenue and Lincoln Way). On this morning trip we will be looking for spring birds that are attracted to the arboretum's varied habitats. Beginners (and all others) welcome. Leader: Alan Ridley (415) 566-3241. (*)

SATURDAY MARCH 22 SAN FRANCISCO BIRD BLITZ

In this annual blitz we expect to tally over 100 different species within the city limits. This year's mad dash, hoping to exceed all previous records, will begin at 7 a.m. sharp. Meet at the north end of Van Ness Ave. (past North Point – the last cross street) at the foot of Municipal Pier. From there we will caravan to other sites including Golden Gate Park, Sutro Baths, Lake Merced and Candlestick Point. Bring lunch and liquids. We will bird until dusk, then adjourn to a restaurant for dinner to recap the day's observations, and for a minimal cost, avoid going home to cook. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983 (*)

SATURDAY MARCH 29 BODEGA BAY

Meet at 9 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 1 and East Shore Rd. (1/2 mile north of Diekmann's Bay Store). We will bird Bodega Harbor and Bodega Head. Waterfowl and shorebirds should be abundant, and shorebirds should be molting into their breeding plumage. Bring lunch and liquids. Campsites are available at Dune's State Park, Westside Co. Park and Doran Co. Park. Call Ticketron to reserve a space. Leader: Nancy Conzett (707) 875-2231. (*)

SATURDAY APRIL 5 SUNOL REGIONAL PARK

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. Take I-680 south to about 8 miles beyond the intersection of Hwy. 580, and turn off at Calaveras Rd. Go south (left) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park, about 5 miles. Bring lunch and liquids. We should see Golden Eagles, a variety of winter residents and early migrants. This trip is also good for wildflowers. Leaders: Ron Lindeman (510) 521-2324 and Leora Feeney \$(*)

SUNDAY APRIL 6 BREEDING BIRDS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Most of our summer breeding species will be in residence. Many male birds will be singing or displaying. Some hummingbirds will be on their second broods. There will be a few lingering winter residents (like wigeon and scoter), but expect the Northern Mockingbird, White-crowned Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird, Hooded Oriole, Marsh Wren, Barn Swallow, Common Raven and many other summer species to be territorial and vocal. We'll study where each species nests and some nest types. Meet at 8:30 a.m. (Remember: this is the first day of Daylight Savings Time) in the Land's End parking lot on Merrie Way just east of the Cliff House. Trip will end at noon. Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229 (*)

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 9
MINI-TRIP TO SUNOL
REGIONAL PARK**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the ranger station parking lot inside the park. Take Hwy. 680 south to about eight miles beyond the intersection of Hwy. 580. Turn off at Calaveras Rd; go left and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park. We may see Lark Sparrows, Golden Eagles, Northern Orioles, plus resident birds of the area. Bring lunch. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman \$(*)

**SATURDAY APRIL 12
RICHARDSON BAY WILDLIFE
SANCTUARY**

Meet at 10 a.m. at Audubon Center in the Wildlife Sanctuary, 376 Greenwood Rd. in Tiburon. From Hwy 101 take the Belvedere/Tiburon Exit; go east and turn right at the third traffic light, Greenwood Cove Rd., then an immediate left. We will enjoy a 45-minute slide show in the classroom, then from 11:00 to 12:00 look for birds along the trail and along Richardson Bay shoreline, followed by a brief tour of the historic Lyford House (always a highlight). After lunch, we will probably carpool to the Corte Madera shoreline for more waterfowl. Trip will end about 2:30. Bring lunch. Beginners welcome. Leader: Ranger Bill Bixby (415) 388-2524, Wed-Sun., daytime.

**SATURDAY APRIL 19
BOTHE-NAPA VALLEY STATE
PARK**

Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot. This is a particularly beautiful park in the spring, with migrating warblers and vireos, Winter Wrens and, if we're lucky, Pileated Woodpeckers. We will walk about four to five miles and bird mostly by ear. From the East Bay: drive north on I-80 beyond Vallejo and take the Napa exit. Follow Hwy. 29 to St. Helena. The entrance to the park is on the left just past the Ole Bale Mill north of St. Helena. From the West Bay: take Hwy. 101 north to Hwy. 37 near Novato; go east to the junction with Hwy. 121; turn left and continue on 121 until it joins Hwy. 29 near Napa; continue north on 29 to the park. Beginners welcome. Bring lunch and liquids. Trip usually ends early to mid-afternoon. Rain cancels. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. \$(*)

**SATURDAY, APRIL 19
MINES ROAD, LIVERMORE**

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot of the Nob Hill Shopping Center. Take I-580 east and turn right on No. Livermore Exit. Continue south two miles to the Nob Hill Shopping Center at So. Livermore and Pacific in Livermore. From there, we will caravan on mountain roads to Patterson. We can expect to see Northern Orioles, Lewis' Woodpecker, Lawrence's Goldfinches and Phainopeplas in this habitat. Bring food and liquids. Those who want are invited

**Come One,
Come All!**

How your concern for our area's bird even when they're on their winter vacations in Central America, and join the Panama Committee.

The March meeting for the Panama Committee is Monday, the 17th at 7:30 p.m., and April's meeting will be held on the 14th at 7:30. Both will be at Miles McKey's house, 76 Hillcrest Rd., Berkeley. For more information call Miles (Committee Chair) at (510) 652-5854. Everyone is welcome.



to continue with the group until dark. Leader: George Bing (510) 443-5868.

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked with a (*). See below. If you need a ride or can take some one, need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, have suggestions for trips, or IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEADING A TRIP, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.



March Meeting

Keeping the Wetlands Wet

Up until the last two centuries, the Bay Area had huge expanses of tidal marsh that supported so much wildlife that the flights of ducks would darken the skies and one could walk across the backs of salmon while crossing streams.

Today we have lost 85% of our wetlands, and our resources are diminished. But an effort is being made by groups like Campaign to Save California Wetlands, of which GGAS is part of, to help save what is left and to begin the exciting task of restoring tidal marshes.

Ruth Gravanis and Arthur Feinstein will give a slide presentation on the state of the Bay Wetlands. They will discuss where our wetlands are, why they are important, what threats they face, and what GGAS and Campaign to Save California Wetlands are doing, including what's happening at Arrowhead



Marsh and volunteer opportunities.

Both Ruth and Arthur are members of The Campaign to Save California Wetlands steering committee and are very active and important members of our environmental community.

Thursday

March 20

7:30 p.m.

The Josephine Randall Museum

San Francisco

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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Published each month except August by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA.

Send address changes to office promptly. Post Office does not forward *The Gull*. Monthly meeting: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership, local and national, \$30 dollars per year (\$20 per year new members) includes *Audubon Magazine* and *The Gull*. Renewals should be sent directly to National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *The Gull* separately: \$10 per year, single issues \$1.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. *The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month's issue and July 15th for the September issue.

The Gull -- ISSN 0164-971X

Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702
Phone: (510) 845-2222
Fax: (510) 845-5551

Office Hours:
Tuesday - Friday 9-12, 1-4

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